



Transportation Commission Retreat

June 1, 2016

6:00pm-8:00pm

2900 Business Center Drive – Training Room B

Summary Notes

Commissioners Present:

- Jerry King, Chair
- Nate Macek, Vice Chair
- John Chapman, City Council
- David Brown, Planning Commission
- James Lewis, Traffic and Parking Board
- Stephen Klejst, Alexandria Transit Company Board
- Jake Jakubek, Citizen Representative
- Ryan Jones, Citizen Representative
- Christine Michaelis, Citizen Representative

Staff Present

- Carrie Sanders, Acting Deputy Director of Transportation and Environmental Services
- Steve Sindiong, Acting Division Chief of Transportation Planning (TES)
- Bob Garbacz, Division Chief of Traffic Engineering
- Ravindra Raut, Traffic Engineering
- Patrick Reed, Transportation Planning
- Karen Callahan, Transportation Planning

Consultant

- Sherry Schiller, The Schiller Center

Agenda Item 1 – Tour of the Traffic Operations Center

Traffic Engineer Division Chief Bob Garbacz and Traffic Engineer Ravi Raut provided the Commissioners an overview of the Traffic Operations Center in an open-house format. Members of the Commission toured the facility. Staff responded to questions about the network, the monitoring system, and how the operations team uses the equipment to improve transportation efficiency within the bounds of the City.

Agenda Item 2 – Introductions/Retreat Purpose

Acting Deputy Director Carrie Sanders introduced herself, members of staff, and Sherry Schiller, the evening's facilitator. The Commissioners introduced themselves to Ms. Schiller. Sanders detailed the purpose of the retreat, which was to:

- Review the Commission's role and mission
- Provide update materials & review existing FOIA regulations
- Discuss existing processes
- Strategize about improving meeting effectiveness

Agenda Item 3 – Transportation Commission Purpose

Acting Deputy Director Carrie Sanders explained that the role of the Transportation Commission is to advocate and promote the development of balanced transportation systems, as well as ensure that City projects are consistent with the City's adopted Transportation Master Plan. To do this, the group reviews and holds hearings on Small Area Plans, funding recommendations, and capital projects.

Sanders detailed the charter, which includes the functions and duties discussed above. She continued on to explain how the Commission works in concert with other public bodies in Alexandria and the larger region, and explained that the Transportation Commission is responsible for relaying endorsements and comments to City Council. After briefly detailing the contents of the Commission's bylaws, Sanders introduced Acting Division Chief of Transportation Planning Steve Sindiong.

Agenda Item 5 – Transportation Commission Existing Processes

Sindiong explained how staff develops the Transportation Commission's agenda. The main source of content stems from the annual workplan, which is a fluid document. Staff notes that as the year progresses, projects can be advanced or slip. Additionally, staff works with other City departments and divisions and add content as necessary, so long as it fits within the Transportation Commission's charter. A commissioner asked how commissioners or the public can add content to the Commission's agendas. Sindiong noted that this is possible, so long as the content fits within the scope of the Transportation Commission's charter, but also noted that agendas fill quickly, and that the Commission only has 11 meetings per year. Sindiong explained that items which are informative, but where no action is needed, are typically included in the consent item agenda. Items on consent do not require a motion by the Commission, and are often updates. Sindiong noted that adding items to the consent section of the agenda maximizes efficiency, and allows for deeper discussions for items that require action.

Sindiong introduce Sherry Schiller of the Schiller Center, who would facilitate the remainder of the evening's items.

Sherry Schiller asked the Commissioners to describe effective organizations. The commissioners developed a list of effective groups, and also developed a list of organizational traits that are not effective. Schiller compared and contrasted these traits, and noted that these traits are commonly listed by other organizations when she uses this exercise. Schiller noted that a clear purpose helps organizations work effectively. Schiller noted that the charter and purpose help provide order to an organization.

Schiller continued on to provide an overview of the Freedom of Information Act, as well as Robert's Rules of Order. During the FOIA review, one commissioner asked about adding things to the agenda. Staff noted that there is a three-day notice period that must be adhered to per FOIA. If commissioners want to add content to the agenda, they must do so prior to this deadline. Staff noted that the commissioners may bring something up at a meeting to note that they would like to defer discussion on the item to another time. One commissioner asked about electronic meetings. Staff responded that the City currently does not have provisions for electronic meetings, per the City Attorney. Staff answered basic questions pertaining to record retention from the rest of the commission.

Schiller provided an overview of Roberts Rules of Order. Schiller pointed out that staff had prepared and provided a cheat sheet for Commissioners who may prefer an extra resource. The commissioners discussed longer motions, and the process of making motions. The Commission agreed discussing having draft motions to suggest actions to commissioners (accept/edit/change). Staff agreed to include these in future docket memos to approve efficiency. The commission expressed a desire to limit conversation on some items. One commissioner described motions that can be used to limit discussion or encourage the Commission to put a formal motion on the table.

Schiller explained the process of drafting external communications. These communications are correspondence based on motions drafted and approved by the Transportation Commission. One commissioner asked about the process of making recommendations to external agencies. Sanders noted that the typical process is that Transportation Commission transmit its communications to Council, which will comment on/coordinate with the external organizations.

Agenda Item 6 – Meeting Effectiveness

Schiller passed out a handout, and asked the Commissioners to reflect about different the traits of high-performing boards and commissions. The Commission called out and discussed a number of these traits, emphasizing:

- Maintaining Strategic Thinking
- Self-Discipline and Group Discipline
- Agreeing on Meeting Purpose of Desired Outcomes

The commissioners discussed how to improve understanding between those with professional experience and citizen representatives, improving efficiency in meetings, and coordination with professional staff.

In conclusion of its work. The Transportation Commission developed two operating agreements:

- Be succinct and move forward
- Stay strategic and avoid “getting into the weeds”

The Commission discussed a strategy to self-monitor. Schiller provided an anecdote, and the Transportation Commission developed a code-strategy to use to gently remind other Commissioners of the operating agreements developed and agreed to by the group.

Agenda Item 7 – Next Steps / Work Program

Acting Deputy Director Sanders noted that staff would compile notes on the evening and share them with the commission. Staff offered to entertain questions about the previously addressed upcoming workplan. There being none, Sanders moved into the other business portion of the agenda.

Other Business

Commission Vice Chair Nate Macek noted that he will be leaving the Transportation Commission to circulate to the Waterfront Commission. He introduced Planning Commissioner Melissa McMahon, who will be his replacement on the Transportation Commission. Melissa explained her background to the group.

There being no other comments, the retreat was adjourned.